

Hepatitis B Infant Vaccine

**Keep your child safe.
Get all shots on time.**

By getting all shots on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is hepatitis B vaccine?

Hepatitis B vaccine protects against the hepatitis B virus. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

Hepatitis B vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your local public health nurse or doctor to make an appointment.

Who should get the hepatitis B vaccine?

The vaccine is given to babies as a series of three doses at 2, 4 and 6 months of age. The vaccine is usually combined with other childhood vaccines such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. For more information, see HealthLink BC File [#105 Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hepatitis B, Polio, and Haemophilus Influenzae Type b \(DTaP-HB-IPV-Hib\) Vaccine](#).

Hepatitis B Vaccine	Child's Age at Vaccination
1 st dose	2 months
2 nd dose	4 months
3 rd dose	6 months

Some babies are at greater risk of being infected with hepatitis B virus and should receive a dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth. These babies should then get 3 more doses of vaccine at 2, 4 and 6 months of age. For more information on which babies are at greater risk of infection and how to protect them, see HealthLink BC File [#25d Protecting Your Baby against Hepatitis B at Birth](#).

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

Benefits of Hepatitis B Vaccine

Hepatitis B vaccine is the best way to protect your child against hepatitis B and its complications, including permanent liver damage, which can lead to liver cancer and death.

When you get your child vaccinated, you help protect others as well.

Possible Reactions after the Vaccine

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer for your child to get the vaccine than to get hepatitis B.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, swelling or redness where the shot was given. Mild fever or general discomfort may also occur.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number. This reaction can be treated and occurs in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine.

Report serious or unexpected reactions to your public health nurse or doctor.

Who should not get the hepatitis B vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine, or any component of the vaccine including yeast, or to latex.

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver. It can cause serious disease including permanent liver damage (cirrhosis). Hepatitis B is also the main cause of liver cancer, which can be fatal.

Hepatitis B virus is spread from one infected person to another by contact with blood or body fluids. The virus may also be spread by using items that have blood on them, such as a toothbrush, razor, or needles used for drugs, and by having unprotected sex with someone infected with the virus.

Mothers who are infected with hepatitis B virus can pass the virus to their newborn babies during delivery. When infants get infected with hepatitis B virus, they often do not have symptoms but most will stay infected for life. This is why it is important to protect your child by getting him/her vaccinated at a young age.

For more HealthLink BC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm or your local public health unit.

Click on www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call 8-1-1 for non-emergency health information and services in B.C.

For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance, call 7-1-1 in B.C.

Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.



ImmunizeBC



BC Centre for Disease Control
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